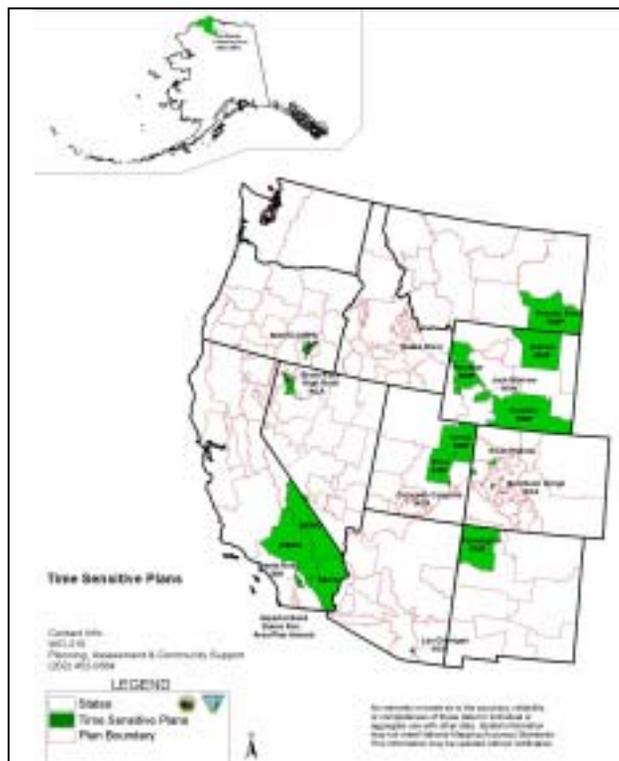


Update on BLM's Land Use Planning Progress

Since the first issue of the Time Sensitive Plans (TSP) News, BLM and its partners have made considerable progress in the land use planning initiative thanks to the continued efforts of BLM's contractors, cooperators and many active citizens across the country. In this edition of the TSP News, we'd like to highlight a few of these recent successes.

In California, two Records of Decision (ROD) were signed in December 2002 for land use plans in the California Desert District. After resolving protests related to Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) management and threatened and endangered species, California State Director Mike Pool signed the RODs for the Proposed Northern and Eastern Mojave Desert Management Plan and the Proposed Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert Coordinated Management Plan. Completing these plans was an important element of a court ordered lawsuit settlement. The decisions modify or remove some of the court mandated OHV closures in the California Desert. In Arizona, the protest on the Proposed Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area has been resolved and a ROD will be approved within 30 days. The fact that only one protest was received on the Proposed RMP is a tribute to the many stakeholders who worked collaboratively throughout the planning process.

As an element of the agency's Action Plan to implement the President's National Energy Policy, BLM made significant progress on several plans addressing the management of important energy (continued on next pg.)



The map above shows the locations of TSPs, which are shaded in green.

What are "Time Sensitive Plans?"

Starting in FY 2001, BLM began its largest and most concentrated effort in land use planning in more than 15 years, with National, regional, and local expectations. Over the next 10 years, BLM plans to update its entire planning base, consisting of more than 160 land use plans. Establishing clear priorities is key to managing increasing workload demands and vital to the overall success of the planning initiative. Accordingly, the BLM has identified 21 high priority land use plans as TSPs. These plans are the most critical of the more than 80 land use planning efforts on-going in FY 2003. The TSPs were selected because they are related to development of energy resources, respond to nationally significant lawsuits or have legislatively mandated time frames.

Update on BLM's Land Use Planning Progress (cont.)

resources in an environmentally sensitive manner. BLM issued two Final EISs/Proposed RMP amendments for public lands located in the Powder River Basin of Montana and Wyoming. The Powder River Basin, straddling the Wyoming-Montana border, is one of the country's most mineral-rich regions, supplying approximately one-third of the nation's coal and significant oil and natural gas. BLM's State Director in Alaska released the Draft Integrated Activity Plan/EIS for a portion of the National Petroleum Reserve in January; this plan is featured as a prototype for the BLM's ePlanning project, which is described in this edition of the TSP News. The Bureau anticipates the release in March 2003 of the Final RMP/EIS for the Farmington, New Mexico planning area and the Draft Supplemental EIS for the Jack Morrow Hills Coordinated Activity Plan/RMP amendment. The Farmington plan will address oil and gas development, OHV management, and land tenure in the northwest part of the state while the Jack Morrow Hills Coordinated Activity Plan will examine options to manage important energy resources while protecting wildlife and other values in Sweetwater, Fremont, and Sublette Counties, Wyoming.

In February, the public will see draft plans for two National Conservation Areas: Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails (NV), and Gunnison Gorge (CO).

For more information on the current status of the Time Sensitive land use plans, please refer to the insert in this newsletter.

E-Gov for Planning and NEPA pilot project site launched 1/17/2003

As BLM embarks on a new era of planning, we need to create more efficient, standardized, and cost effective business practices and encourage an open and collaborative process. To address these needs, BLM has launched the "E-Gov for Planning and NEPA Project." This project

applies modern techniques of information technology, especially the use of the World Wide Web and spatial display and analysis, to BLM's land use and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) processes. In addition, we anticipate that data and information created in this project can be reused in subsequent resource applications, thus reducing the overall cost of operations to the taxpayer and BLM.

What is "E-Gov for Planning and NEPA?"

E-Gov for Planning and NEPA, or "ePlanning," is a project that enables the user to view and manipulate planning information with fully integrated text and interactive map layers. ePlanning provides automated tools and information technology (IT) so that planning teams can create integrated documents, provide a common look and feel for BLM land use plans, establish easy and efficient methods for public participation and access the planning data as needed to implement the plan.

In addition, citizens can manipulate spatial data/information without further BLM involvement, thus increasing the value of the business process. This effort ultimately promotes collaboration, reduces duplicative efforts, saving money, and forms cost-sharing partnerships.



Coalbed Methane Development in the Price RMP Planning Area, UT



Horseback Riding on Steens Mountain, OR

ePlanning provides a new approach to land use planning that encourages an openly participative, collaborative, and community-based land use planning process.

ePlanning is an innovative application of one component of the President's Management Agenda, E-Government. E-Government encourages federal agencies to use IT to produce better, faster, and cheaper results, focus on the ultimate customer, the citizen and taxpayer, and create a government that works better and costs less.

What is so unique about ePlanning?

This new way of planning is facilitated by dynamic web-based documents in which users both within the BLM, as well as the public, will be able to read Resource Management Plans, submit comments, and view maps related to these plans. Interactive documents link specific sections of text to specific features on maps and allow users to "click" on map features to view relevant text, as well as to identify specific document text and connect where on the landscape that text is relevant. ePlanning allows for the public to submit on-line comments on planning documents. Geography is central to planning, and ePlanning makes geographic data available to anyone with a computer and an Internet connection.

In what stage is this project?

BLM is now in its second year of the project and has recently completed and launched a pilot

project demonstrating the integrated document. You are encouraged to look at the pilot at <http://www.ak.blm.gov/nwnpra>. See page 4 for examples of the NPR-A ePlanning website.

The pilot land use plan chosen to showcase this project is the Northwest National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPR-A), which is a Time-Sensitive Plan that will provide management direction for 8.8 million acres of public lands in Alaska. This pilot project features a text area for one to read planning documents, a map mode for viewing many different types of spatial information, and a comment submission tool. The pilot will be used as a platform to develop the ePlanning tools using a "launch and learn approach" in collaboration with the Northwest NPR-A Planning Team. The first tool will be a comment analysis module. All other tools will be developed between now and June 2003, based on the needs of the NPR-A team.

How is this project being implemented?

BLM will develop a "Best Practices Manual" for transferring land use planning information for current planning efforts into the ePlanning system. This manual will include practical advice such as hardware and software requirements, data types, and tips on preparing text and map data for conversion into this system.

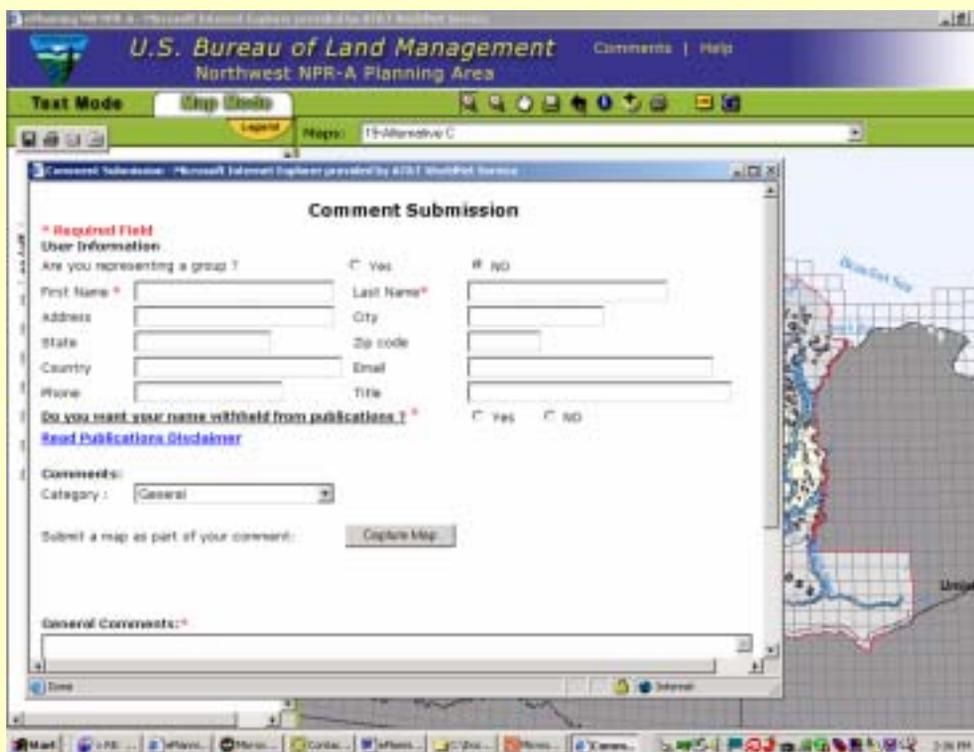


Livestock grazing, Jack Morrow Hills, WY

Sample views from the NPR-A ePlanning website



Interactive documents link specific sections of text to specific features on maps and allow users to “click” on map features to view relevant text, as well as to identify specific document text and connect where on the landscape that text is relevant.



The comment submission tool encourages more substantive comments by educating the user on the issues. A commenter can highlight a specific section of text or select locations on a map and have those portions of the land use plan included with the comment.

Status Report for the TSPs - February 12, 2003

(1) Alaska: National Petroleum Reserve Alaska (NPRA)

The Northern Alaska Field Office has issued a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). Public comments are being accepted until March 18, 2003. A Record of Decision (ROD) is currently scheduled for November 2003.

Plan Contact: Mike Kleven, 907-474-2317

(2) Arizona: Las Cienegas National Conservation Area (NCA)

The Tuscon Field Office has completed the proposed RMP/Final EIS for Las Cienegas NCA and is currently in the protest resolution phase.

Plan Contact: Karen Simms, 520-258-7210

3,4,5) California: NECO, NEMO, and WEMO Amendments

The California Desert District Field Office / Barstow Field Office published and distributed the proposed RMP/Final EIS for Northeast Colorado (NECO) and Northeast Mojave (NEMO) in August 2002; RODs were approved in December 2002. The Barstow Field Office is in the process of developing a Draft EIS for the Western Mojave (WEMO) Amendment.

Plan contacts: Dick Crowe (NECO; California Desert), 909-697-5216; Edyth Seehafer (NEMO; Barstow), 760-252-6021; Bill Haigh (WEMO; Barstow), 760-252-6080

(6) California: Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Plan

The El Centro Field Office is working to prepare the proposed RMP/Final EIS. A ROD is currently planned for September 2003.

Plan contact: Roxie Trost, 760-337-4420

(7) California: Santa Rosa / San Jacinto National Monument (NM)

The scoping period for this plan ended in October 2002. The Palm Springs Field Office is expected to prepare a Draft RMP/EIS in March 2003.

Plan contact: Connell Dunning, 760-251-4817



Dunes rider in the California Desert

(8) Colorado: Colorado Canyons NCA

The scoping period ended in November 2002. The Grand Junction Field Office will be working on the scoping report and alternatives this winter and spring. A Draft RMP/EIS will be issued in October 2003.

Plan contact: Jane Ross, 970-244-3000

(9) Colorado: Roan Plateau

The Glenwood Springs Field Office recently completed a public comment period for the alternatives and is currently developing a Draft RMP/EIS for publication in May 2003.

Plan contact: Greg Goodenow, 970-947-2900

(10) Colorado: Gunnison Gorge

The Uncompahgre Field Office will release a Draft RMP/EIS in February 2003. The ROD is currently scheduled for October 2003.

Plan contact: Bill Bottomly, 970-240-5337

(11) Montana: Billings / Powder River

The Miles City Field Office issued the proposed RMP/Final EIS on January 17, 2003, marking the beginning of a 30-day protest period. Pending protest resolution, the ROD is expected in March 2003.

Plan contact: Mary Bloom, 406-233-3649

(12) New Mexico: Farmington RMP Revision

The Farmington Field Office released a Draft RMP/EIS in July 2002. The public comment period closed in September 2002. The office is currently working to prepare a proposed RMP/ Final EIS for release in February 2003.

Plan contact: Jim Ramakka, 505-599-6307

(13) Nevada: Black Rock/High Rock NCA

The Winnemucca Field Office will release a Draft RMP/EIS in February 2003. The ROD is currently scheduled for November 2003.

Plan contact: Ester Hutchison, 775-623-1500

(14) Oregon: Steens Cooperative Management and Protection Area (CMPA)

The Andrews Field Office completed the formulation of alternatives in June 2002, with an expected Draft RMP/EIS publication date in August 2003.

Plan contact: Gary Foulkes, 541-573-4541

(15) Utah: Price RMP Revision

The Price Field Office is currently working on the Draft RMP/EIS. The Draft RMP/EIS is expected in December 2003.

Plan contact: Floyd Johnson, 435-636-3600

(16) Utah: Vernal RMP Revision

The Vernal Field Office is currently developing a Draft RMP/EIS for the Vernal RMP Revision. The Draft RMP/EIS is expected in September 2003.

Plan contact: Dave W. Moore, 435-781-4467

(17) Wyoming: Buffalo/Powder River Amendment

The Buffalo Field Office issued the proposed RMP/Final EIS on January 17, 2003, marking the beginning of a 30-day protest period. Pending protest resolution, the ROD is expected in March 2003.

Plan contact: Paul Beels, 307-684-1168

(18) Wyoming: Jack Morrow Hills CAP/RMP Amendment

The Draft Supplemental EIS for the Jack Morrow Hills Coordinated Activity Plan (CAP)/RMP Amendment is currently scheduled for release in February 2003.

Plan contact: Renee Dana, 307-352-0227

(19) Wyoming: Snake River RMP

The Pinedale Field Office will release the Draft RMP/EIS in February 2003.

Plan contact: Kellie Roadifer, 307-367-5309

(20) Wyoming: Pinedale RMP Revision

The Pinedale Field Office expects to have a Draft RMP/EIS in October 2003. Public meetings are scheduled for March, 2003.

Plan contact: Kellie Roadifer, 307-367-5309

(21) Wyoming: Great Divide/Rawlins RMP Revision

The Rawlins Field Office expects to have a Draft RMP/EIS in October 2003. Public meetings are scheduled for March, 2003.

Plan contact: John Spehar, 307-328-4264



Citizens hike through the Rawlins RMP (WY) planning area